

The Builder.

No. CCCCXIV.

SATURDAY, JULY 24, 1862.



HOSE who know Ireland only through the London newspapers, have a very different notion of the country from the right one. The most effective step that can be taken to interest the English in the prosperity of the sister-country is to lead them to visit it. They may be assured of finding everywhere pleasant looks, kindness, and attention. The means of transit are excellent, the roads good, and the objects of interest numerous. Up to this time the visitors from England have been comparatively few; but juster notions are spreading, the facilities are increased, and the visitors increasing.

Finer natural scenery is not to be found than many parts of Ireland present; and those of our readers who view with more pleasure the remains of earlier times,—the cromlech, the chambered mound, the sculptured cross, the ruined church,—will find here no want of objects for examination. You may breakfast in London, and be in Dublin by half-past ten the same night; and those who are now organising the traffic expect to shorten this an hour and a half before long.

On Friday morning we were in London, and on Saturday morning were pelting along on an "outside car" in Wicklow county, through some of the finest and most striking scenery that eye ever rested on. At starting, we fell on the Shanganagh Cromlech, close to Dublin, the covering stone of which is about 9 feet long, and 7 feet broad.

The division of the land into small holdings gives wonderful richness to the view when you gaze down into the valleys from the mountain side. We are not about to write a "guide," or we should have to tell of the Dargle, with its woods and water; the Powerscourt demesne; the Waterfall; and Sir Philip Frampton's Cottage by the side of Lough Bray. We should mention, too, Sir George Hodson's residence, a house of some importance, in the Tudor style, built of enduring granite, from the designs of the late Mr. W. V. Morrison. It is beautifully placed, and the grounds are charming, but its completeness is marred by the introduction of classic vases. The view from the Sugar Loaf mountain, as we passed over it, was very fine: the surrounding hills were covered with deep shadows, showing nevertheless bright patches here and there: the clouds were kissing the tops, and would then sweep off and leave the outline sharp against the blue sky behind. Through what is known as the Scalp, a sharp cleft in the mountains, you get a view of Dublin county also. Our destination when we took this road was the wild valley of Glendalough and the ruins of the Seven Churches, which no tourist, whether antiquary, architect, or simply lover of the beautiful should miss. The structures are very early in date. One of these, known as St. Kevin's Kitchen, has a portion of a Round Tower springing from the roof.

We will be a little more precise hereafter, for, in truth, the place deserves it. It is full of story; and there is an eccentric wild guide,

one George Winder, who boasts of his intimacy with Mrs. Hall, "Master Tommy Moore," Lord John, and the Wise Men, meaning the members of the British Association. He reproached some begging-girls for "going after us, instead of after Christian doctrine or the catechism," and mixed up with some useful information strange stories of Cyclops, giants, the Egyptians, and the lake o'er which the lark never sings. There are some notices of the ruins in Mr. Wakeman's very useful "Handbook of Irish Antiquities," published by Mr. M'Glashan, to whom literature in Ireland is much indebted. "The Beauties of the Boyne," also published by him, we shall have another opportunity to mention. The book you see in most hands just now is Mr. Roney's "Hand Book," which contains a large amount of information pleasantly conveyed. In a succeeding edition it will be advisable to amplify the accounts of architectural antiquities. It will be needed, at all events, for the influx of visitors to the proposed Great Exhibition next year, the arrangements for which are making progress. Premiums have been offered for designs for the building to be sent in by the last day of this month, and though not advertised in the London papers,—an error on the part of the committee, as it seems to us,—plans would, of course, be received from English architects. It is so desirable to obtain a first-rate building, that we hope the committee will be led to enlarge the time.

One word as to the 26th exhibition of the Royal Hibernian Academy, which is now open, though it is not very remarkable for excellence. It consists of 395 works of art, including a large number of portraits. There are several excellent sketches by J. F. Lewis; Mulready's picture, "Train up a child in the way he should go;" a painting from Don Quixote (105), by the late Arthur Joy; and a clever female portrait, by Cregan (125). The architectural works are few in number, and poor in character. Mr. Mulvany, being a member of the Academy, should have set a good example, by sending a better drawing of his terminus of the Midland Great Western Railway. Amongst the sculpture are a few good busts, and a statue of the late Sir M. O'Loghlin, by Christopher Moore. It is to be regretted that Dublin has no public collection of paintings, or as we should rather say, it is to be desired that steps should forthwith be taken to found a gallery.

Next week we will look a little farther.

ON THE DECORATION SUITABLE TO ST. PAUL'S.

REFERENCE was made in a communication last week to the discussion of this subject, and it may be useful to record some of the observations that were made. A report by Mr. Cockerell in 1849, based on the recorded intentions of Sir C. Wren, respecting the decorations of this noble pile, was read.*

Mr. Cockerell's recommendations were,—
"First, to restore the painting and gilding of the dome and parts adjacent thereto, as part and parcel of that magnificence designed and

directed by Sir C. Wren himself; and, however different in style from that at present approved, it is highly decorative and appropriate to the architecture, and is too far removed from the eye to challenge minute criticism. Secondly, to carry out the gilding and painting of the symbols and ornaments of the choir, as already commenced at the communion end, together with all the becoming ornaments to the gates, the pulpit, the stalls, the organ, the communion rail and table, &c. Thirdly, to replace the whole of the twenty-three lower windows on the floor of the Cathedral with Scripture subjects in coloured glass, offering, as this occasion would, the first grand opportunity, since the Reformation, of illustrating the unadulterated word of God in spirit and in truth, and uncontaminated by the apocryphal and superstitious representations, which occupied this noble art under the Papistic doctrines and direction.

Such a mode of decoration is at once the most conformable to Christian and ancient associations, and the most economical that could be devised, at the same time that it is the most splendid, since, as the vehicle of light, it transmits all that effect and lustre to the interior which mural decoration fails to effect in the same degree, and which, in fact, it supersedes."

Mr. Penrose said, the first thing which he had to inform them was, that the restoration of Sir James Thornhill's cupola had taken a very definite shape. He was authorised to state that it had become a practical question with the Dean and Chapter, and no pains would be spared on their part to get the whole of the cupola and the drum effectually restored. Mr. Penrose stated, in continuation, that the restoration of the cupola in chiaro-scuro, with a very large amount of gilding, must be taken as the starting point for other decorations of the cathedral. He thought, therefore, that surface painting in colours would be out of place, with the exception of the windows, which should be of stained glass. Where the walls of a building and the windows were alike highly coloured, there was a want of harmony. In the most highly coloured Italian buildings not much light was admitted, and that almost always through comparatively pure glass. Where coloured glass was employed, natural colours, or natural materials, were used on the walls, so that they never had the glaring or prominent effect of surface colouring. The apse was already ornamented with a sufficient or satisfactory amount of gilding; but a certain amount of chiaro-scuro decoration was wanted (as in the cupola) to bear out that gilding. He pointed out the architectural features of the vaulting, consisting of three small cupolas with their spandrels, separated by a magnificent guilloche. If the depths of the latter were increased by a little chiaro-scuro, and a great deal of gilding, that, he thought, would be sufficient for it. The spandrels were evidently intended by Wren for some coloured decorations, and they furnished admirable situations for the introduction of single figures or small groups. In the small cupolas, however, figures would be objectionable, and therefore these surfaces would be better ornamented architecturally with painted coffers, slightly differing in shape from the actual coffers to the eastward, but brought into harmony with them. The spandrels of the main arches of the choir were admirably adapted for painting in monochrome. It might be fitting to insert coloured porphyries or marbles into the panels beneath the windows, or even to paint them,—as the pilasters in the apse were already most effectively painted in imitation of lapis lazuli. He had not yet considered the decoration of the aisles, his object being merely, by these observations, to elicit the opinions of members.

* *Parvatis*, p. 221.—"The twenty-four cupolas of St. Paul's are formed of brick with stone wreaths, the brick treated with enamel-colour, which becomes as hard as Portland stone, and which having large planes between the stone ribs, are capable of further ornaments of painting if required." *Parvatis*, p. 221.—"The judgment of the surveyor was originally, instead of painting in the manner it is now performed, to have beautified the inside of the cupola with the more durable ornament of mosaic work, as is nobly executed in St. Peter's, at Rome. Such stripes of gold and border with the most magnificent and splendid appearance, and which, without the least loss of colour, is on lasting on marble, or the build-

ing itself." *Ac. Parvatis*, p. 221.—"The painting and gilding of the architecture at the east end of the church over the communion table was intended only to serve the present occasion, till such time as materials could have been procured for a magnificent design of an altar-piece, consisting of four pillars, wreathed of the richest Greek marbles, &c. for which the respective drawings and a model were prepared. Information and particular description of certain blocks of marble were once sent to the Right Rev. Dr. Compton, Bishop of London, &c. but unavailingly colours and scannings did not answer the purpose." *Ac.*